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The American Institute of Sacred Literature

BIBLE STUDY SUNDAY

As year after year the same general subject comes before the pastor for presentation to his church on some special day set for it, there are invariably many who experience a feeling of reluctance at the thought of working up a new sermon on an old theme. This is particularly true when the theme is one in which the points to be made are so obvious as in the subject of the necessity or desirability of Bible study.

It is interesting, therefore, to notice the great variety of special themes and the different points of view from which this subject was approached in sermons actually preached on Bible Study Sunday in 1906. The themes given below are but a few selected from a large number, as suggestive in character.

From the point of view of history: How the Bible originated; our German Bible, our English Bible; the Bible as a book with a history needing to be studied in the light of that history; Josiah's revival in Bible study; Christ's call to Bible study; the debt of modern civilization to the Bible; Christ revealed alone in Scripture: a reason for Bible study.

From the point of view of the Bible as literature: A course of five sermons: where we got our Bible, sources of the Old Testament, sources of the New Testament, contents of the Old Testament, contents of the New Testament; our inheritance in the Old Testament; the Bible: a study in literary values; the place of the Bible in the literature of the civilized world; sacred literature: how to study it; the supreme book; the word of God grew.

In the field of biblical interpretation: What saith the Word of God? some principles of biblical interpretation; the literal interpretation of the Bible; the aid of the Spirit in seeing wondrous things in God's Word; the real Bible and its message; the ruling ideas of the Bible; the Bible and modern thought.

The value of the Bible as related to education is a strong modern appeal. The following themes present that phase of Bible study: our sources of Christian knowledge; a knowledge of the Bible necessary to acceptable service for God; the use of the Scriptures in religious development; Bible study: its importance from the point of view of education; the importance of the Bible from the standpoint of general culture; religious education a revival; the textbook of the Bible school; educational ideas in the Bible

school; Jesus' statement of the cause of error; how to make the Bible real; necessity for co-operation of parents in the Sunday school.

Concerning the Bible in relation to life we have: the positive need of sane Bible study and its effect upon the individual, the church, and social life; the message of the Bible to the present age; Bible study: the condition of strong, useful, happy, Christian lives; the best in life comes from studying the best; the culture of the soul; investment and income; the message of the Bible essential to good citizenship; what fifteen minutes of Bible study each day will do for me; keep your vineyard.

The following are not classified: moral purpose leads to the study of moral things; the church studying the Bible; some aspects of the Bible as a popular book, as a library, as a record of human experience, as a covenant, as a revelation, as a companion; the unshaken Bible; what has God to show humanity through the Bible; the Bible as an unexcelled field for literary, historical, and social study; the Bible, its structure, its permanent character, its influence.

The texts used were in only a few cases reported, yet here also an unexpected variety appears: Ex. 15:17; Josh. 1:8; Ps. 119: 41, 47, 97, 105, 130, 131, 165; Prov. 3:1-6; Ps. 1:2; Isa. 55:11; Neh. 8:18; John 5:39, 40; Mark 12:24; Acts 17:11; 20:32; Col. 3:16; II Tim. 3:15, 16, 17; II Peter 1:4. The INSTITUTE would be glad to receive suggestions of other themes or texts appropriate for use on Bible Study Sunday.

Some interesting new books have appeared in the field of general biblical criticism during the last year. The following are popular in character and suggestive to one who wishes to preach upon Bible study: Vernon, *The Religious Value of the Old Testament*; Price, *The Ancestry of Our English Bible*; Selleck, *The New Appreciation of the Bible*; Waring, *Christianity and Its Bible*; Houghton, *Hebrew Life and Thought*. Suggestive material will also be found in the editorials of the *Biblical World* for August, November, December, 1906, and January to April, 1907. An article, "The True and Permanent Significance of the Old Testament," by Eduard König, appeared in the February number. By consulting the full index to the *Biblical World*, published in the December number, reference will be found to many editorials and articles of value upon the subject of Bible study. *Religious Education*, a bi-monthly journal published by the Religious Education Association, also contains articles upon the progress of biblical study in various fields. The *Quarterly Bulletin* of the AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF SACRED LITERATURE for March contains statistics of the work accomplished by that organization. The *Quarterly Bulletin* for June will be devoted almost entirely to material relating to Bible Study Sunday.